

Message Text

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ORIGIN IO-14

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 ICA-11 INR-10 NSAE-00 AID-05 AF-10
ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 L-03 OIC-02
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, OCON, SOPN, UNESCO

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATION ISSUES IN 104TH EXBD AND 20 C/5

1. STRONG CRITICISM HAS ERUPTED OFTEN DURING PAST TWO
YEARS OF UNESCO'S PAPERS, REPORTS, STUDIES, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND EXPERTS' CONSULTATIONS ON MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION,
PARTICULARLY AMONG MEMBERSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL PRESS
INSTITUTE, INTER AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, AND INTER
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS. THEY GENERALLY
ACCUSE UNESCO SECRETARIAT OF SHOWING OVERT AND SYSTEMATIC
BIAS AGAINST CONVENTIONAL CONCEPTS OF FREE FLOW OF INFOR-
MATION AND OF INFLUENCING DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION
POLICIES IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ALONG AUTHORITARIAN
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LINES.

2. DEPT. WILL NOT UNDERTAKE EITHER TO PROVE OR DISAPPROVE
THE ALLEGATIONS, BUT NEITHER CAN IT REMAIN ALOOF FROM THE
CONTROVERSY. WE WISH TO SHOW THAT WE ARE AWARE OF THE
PROBLEM AND CONCERNED THAT IT MAY WEAKEN UNESCO'S
EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPLICATE U. S. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE
ORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ACCUSATIONS ARE OFTEN
EXCESSIVELY EMOTIONAL AND HIGHLY INTEMPERATE. WE BELIEVE
THAT EXTREMIST ATTACKS ABUSING UNESCO AND/OR DG ARE NOT

HELPFUL AND IN FACT MAKE A SOLID DEFENSE OF FREE FLOW MORE

DIFFICULT. IT IS THEREFORE APPROPRIATE FOR THE U.S. EXBD MEMBER PRO TEM TO ADDRESS THE CONTROVERSY IN HIS PLENARY STATEMENT. IN COMMITTEE SESSIONS DISCUSSING THE DRAFT 20 C/5, USDEL SHOULD BE MORE SPECIFIC, CHALLENGING THE VALUE OR APPROPRIATENESS OF CERTAIN PROJECTS DESCRIBED THEREIN AND PROPOSING PRAGMATIC SUBSTITUTES FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND OFTEN IDEOLOGICALLY LOADED TREATISES PROPOSED.

3. THE FOLLOWING REMARKS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR INSERTION IN PLENARY STATEMENT. BEGIN INSERT: WE NOTE WITH SOME SATISFACTION THAT IN THE DRAFT 20 C/5, IN APPARENT RESPONSE TO THE TUNISIAN RESOLUTION OF THE 19TH SESSION, THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRAMS AIMED AT "SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHICH ARE SEEKING TO ESTABLISH AND STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS IN LINE WITH THEIR NEEDS." WE SHALL HAVE SOME MORE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS NATURE WHEN WE UNDERTAKE A MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT C/5.

4. IT IS NO SECRET THAT SOME OF THE STUDIES AND REPORTS
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IN THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR ISSUED UNDER THE UNESCO IMPRIMATUR HAVE STIRRED CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM. OCCASIONALLY THIS CRITICISM HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY HARSH AND OFFENSIVE TOWARD UNESCO AND ITS OFFICERS. I WISH TO DISASSOCIATE MYSELF FROM THESE DISPARAGING ATTACKS. THEY ARE NOT ONLY REGRETTABLE BUT ARE INAPPROPRIATE INSTRUMENTS FOR THE DEFENSE OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION. IT IS FAR MORE APPROPRIATE, I BELIEVE, TO RECALL THE RELEVANT PRINCIPLES IN THE UNESCO CONSTITUTION: "THE UNOBSTRUCTED PURSUIT OF OBJECTIVE TRUTH AND THE FREE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE." MR. CHAIRMAN, WE HAVE STRONGLY OPPOSED SOME INITIATIVES WHICH HAVE EMERGED IN UNESCO AND WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE UNFAITHFUL OR INJURIOUS TO THESE PRINCIPLES. AND THERE ARE ASPECTS OF THE UNESCO PROGRAM WHICH WE VIEW WITH SOME SKEPTICISM AS TO THEIR UTILITY AND DESIRABILITY. WE SHALL NOT HESITATE TO QUESTION PROJECTS WHICH WE REGARD AS ILL-CONCEIVED OR A DEVIATION FROM UNESCO'S CONSTITUTION OR THE MANDATE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. THE CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION ISSUES DEMANDS SPECIAL CARE IN DESIGNING PROJECTS. I REFER PARTICULARLY TO SOME STUDIES UNDER OBJECTIVES 4/9.1 AND 4/9.3 IN THE 20 C/5.

5. I SHALL BE CANDID ENOUGH TO OBSERVE THAT CERTAIN PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN PARAGRAPHS 4447-4450 AND 4524-4525, HAVE AROUSED SUSPICIONS THAT THEY MAY BE

MORE LIKELY TO PRODUCE ARBITRARY AND "A PRIORI" ASSERTIONS

THAN FINDINGS DEDUCED FROM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH METHODS. I DO NOT WISH TO BE UNFAIR OR INTELLECTUALLY INCONSISTENT BY PRESUMING TO PREJUDGE THE OUTCOMES, SO I MUST SUSPEND JUDGMENT AND HOPE FOR THE BEST. I TRUST THAT THE FINAL PRODUCTS WILL SHOW THAT FAIRNESS, BALANCE AND OBJECTIVITY HAVE INDEED PREVAILED. CONTROVERSY OF COURSE CANNOT BE IGNORED, NOR SHOULD IT BE. SECTARIAN VIEWS AND PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTATION ARE DESIRABLE IN ANY PUBLIC FORUM, SUCH AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THE UNESCO "COURIER" WHICH EFFECTIVELY MIRRORS THE RICH DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM WITHIN THIS ORGANIZATION. THERE IS NO PLACE FOR NARROW DOGMATISM OR ORTHODOXY IN THE FREE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS. BUT STUDIES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS PUBLISHED UNDER THE AEGIS OF UNESCO SHOULD ALWAYS, IN OUR VIEW, DEMONSTRATE BALANCE AND ACCURACY. END INSERT.

6. IN PROGRAM COMMISSION MEETING, THE FOLLOWING POINTS MAY BE RAISED IN IDENTIFYING THE KINDS OF STUDIES WHICH WE BELIEVE EVOKE HOSTILE JUDGMENTS OF UNESCO IN MEDIA CIRCLES AS BEING TENDENTIOUS AND GRATUITOUSLY ANTI-WESTERN (NUMBERS REFER TO 20 C/5 PARAGRAPHS):

- 4447: CONCENTRATING ON "ROLE OF COMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES AND TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION WITH A VIEW TO DEFINING THE REASONS FOR THE ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL GAPS WHICH INFLUENCE THE IMBALANCE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES" IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO PROVOKE THE CHARGE THAT UNESCO HAS ALREADY DETERMINED THE CAUSES OF THE IMBALANCE AND ALL THAT REMAINS IS AN ELABORATION OF A PREJUDGED CONCLUSION.

- 4449: EVEN IF THESE FOUR STUDIES ARE COMMISSIONED WITH A SCRUPULOUS ATTENTION TO OVERALL BALANCE, IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW THEY CAN BE MORE THAN POLEMICAL ESSAYS, PROVIDING NEITHER ENLIGHTENMENT NOR A MATERIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNICATION NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FURTHERMORE, THE APRIL 1977 ISSUE OF THE "COURIER" COVERED THESE THEMES WELL.

- 4450: THIS PROJECT LIKEWISE IS NO HELP TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' NEEDS. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS MEETING
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IS NOT LIKELY TO PRODUCE ANYTHING WHICH HAS NOT ALREADY

BEEN DISCUSSED AT VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS OR IN BOOKS AND PAPERS IN CIRCULATION.

- 4521-4526 (EDUCATION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA): WE SEE THESE TWO PROJECTS AS BEING OF MINIMAL IMPORTANCE, A POOR USE OF SCARCE RESOURCES AND AN INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITY FOR UNESCO.

- 4545 (MECHANISMS FOR THE FORMULATION OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES): A HIGHLY PERTINENT QUESTION HERE WOULD BE: WHICH INDIVIDUALS OR INSTITUTIONS WILL BE OFFERING THE "ADVISORY SERVICES" FOR THE "FORMULATION AND APPLICATION OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATION POLICIES?" THE QUESTION CANNOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, FOR IT GOES TO THE HEART OF MUCH OF THE CRITICISM WHICH HAS BEEN AIMED AT UNESCO.

THERE IS, FOR EXAMPLE, A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE IN THE KIND OF "ADVISORY SERVICES" PROVIDED BY AN INDEPENDENT-MINDED SCHOLAR FROM A SOCIETY DEDICATED TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THOSE SUPPLIED BY AN ADVISER WHO WILL OF NECESSITY BE CONSISTENTLY OBEDIENT TO HIS OWN GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES.

7. UNDERTAKINGS WE WOULD RECOMMEND SUBSTITUTING FOR THE PROJECTS WE HAVE CRITICIZED:

- TECHNICAL OBSTACLES TO COMMUNICATION: AN INVESTIGATION TO IDENTIFY THE TECHNICAL OBSTACLES TO A FREE AND BALANCED FLOW OF INFORMATION ACROSS POLITICAL FRONTIERS, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: (1) INADEQUATE TELE-COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE; (2) SHORTAGE OF TRAINED PERSONNEL AND INVESTMENT CAPITAL; (3) ADMINISTRATIVE IMPEDIMENTS WHICH ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, BOTH BILATERALLY AND REGIONALLY; AND (4) REGULATORY POLICIES AND RATE STRUCTURES ADOPTED BY PTTS OF RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. (THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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WOULD BE AN ADDITION UNDER THEME 9.1/01.)

- CATALOGUING COMMUNICATION NEEDS AND SEEKING ASSISTANCE: THIS RECOMMENDATION IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES REQUIRE COUNSELING BEYOND MERE NEEDS ASSESSMENT. THE POLICY-SETTING FUNCTION REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT OF LONG-TERM GOALS, PRIORITY SCHEMES AND SYSTEMS ANALYSIS BASED ON THE "TRADEOFFS" CONCEPT. FINALLY, THERE IS A NEED FOR GUIDANCE IN TRANSLATING COMMUNICATION PLANNING INTO CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO BE DIRECTED TO SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. THIS STUDY WOULD FORMULATE A MODEL WHICH COULD BE USED BY MOST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

- STUDY OF PUBLIC SERVICE SATELLITE INTERCONNECTION:
HIGH-POWERED COMMUNICATION SATELLITES WHICH REQUIRE
RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE EARTH STATIONS AND MINIMUM OF
TERRESTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE OFFER SPECIAL PROMISE FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE APPLICATIONS IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.
THERE IS NEED FOR A GLOBAL STUDY TO ASSESS THE CAPACITY
OF EXISTING OPERATIONAL SATELLITES OF THIS TYPE TO PROVIDE
SUCH SERVICE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND TO PLAN PILOT

PROJECTS. ALSO NEEDED IS A STUDY TO ASCERTAIN THE
FEASIBILITY OF FORMING AN INTERCONNECTION OF THESE
SATELLITES -- SPECIFICALLY THE SYMPHONIE (FRANCE-FRG),
STATSIONAR (USSR), CTS (CANADA-USA) AND ATS-6 (USA) --
AS A GLOBAL NETWORK FOR PUBLIC SERVICE APPLICATIONS AND USE
BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. (THIS
WOULD BE AN EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THEME 9.4/03.)

8. DEPT. IS UNPREPARED TO DISCUSS THESE SUGGESTIONS IN
GREATER DETAIL AT THE PRESENT, BUT WOULD OF COURSE RESPOND
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TO UNESCO REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF THERE IS
ANY DEMONSTRATION OF GENUINE INTEREST IN THEM. VANCE

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NESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

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POLICIES IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES ALONG AUTHORITARIAN LINES.

2. DEPT. WILL NOT UNDERTAKE EITHER TO PROVE OR DISAPPROVE THE ALLEGATIONS, BUT NEITHER CAN IT REMAIN ALOOF FROM THE CONTROVERSY. WE WISH TO SHOW THAT WE ARE AWARE OF THE PROBLEM AND CONCERNED THAT IT MAY WEAKEN UNESCO'S EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPLICATE U. S. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ACCUSATIONS ARE OFTEN EXCESSIVELY EMOTIONAL AND HIGHLY INTEMPERATE. WE BELIEVE THAT EXTREMIST ATTACKS ABUSING UNESCO AND/OR DG ARE NOT HELPFUL AND IN FACT MAKE A SOLID DEFENSE OF FREE FLOW MORE

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6. IN PROGRAM COMMISSION MEETING, THE FOLLOWING POINTS

MAY BE RAISED IN IDENTIFYING THE KINDS OF STUDIES WHICH WE BELIEVE EVOKE HOSTILE JUDGMENTS OF UNESCO IN MEDIA CIRCLES AS BEING TENDENTIOUS AND GRATUITOUSLY ANTI-WESTERN (NUMBERS REFER TO 20 C/5 PARAGRAPHS):

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COUNTRIES' NEEDS. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS MEETING IS NOT LIKELY TO PRODUCE ANYTHING WHICH HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED AT VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS OR IN BOOKS AND PAPERS IN CIRCULATION.

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STRUCTURES ADOPTED BY PTTS OF RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. (THIS WOULD BE AN ADDITION UNDER THEME 9.1/01.)

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PAPERS, REPORTS, INFORMATION MEDIA, STUDIES, MEETINGS, CONSULTANTS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE111885
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO/UNESCO:FHARTLEY:JU
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780187-0694
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197805112/baaaeyny.tel
Line Count: 493
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c8763895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2539363
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMUNICATION ISSUES IN 104TH EXBD AND 20 C/5
TAGS: AORG, OCON, SOPN, UNESCO
To: PARIS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c8763895-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014